

Central Indiana

May 2017

Climate Summary

Tied for 68th Coolest on record at Indianapolis

8th Wettest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

Cool and wet weather to finish April continued into the first several days of May with most locations remaining below 70° for highs until the 9th. The coolest temperatures occurred on the 3rd and 4th as heavy rain and raw conditions impacted central Indiana. Several locations were unable to rise out of the 40s on the 4th, including Indianapolis with a high of 48°, the coolest daily high temperature recorded in May since May 6, 1989 when the high only made it to 47°.

After frosty mornings in the 30s for many from the 6th through the 8th, temperatures warmed briefly into the lower 80s by the 10th before slipping back into the 60s and lower 70s. Beginning on the 14th, an extended string of warm weather courtesy of high pressure and southerly flow saw daily high above 80°, peaking in the mid and upper 80s on the 18th. A frontal boundary setting up over central Indiana led to cooler temperatures over northern parts of the area on the 19th and 20th while southern portions of central Indiana remained in the 80s.

The passage of a cold front on the 21st followed by the impacts from an upper level low pressure brought cooler air south into the region. Highs in the 60s and lower 70s were common through the 25th before upper 70s and lower 80s returned for the region for Memorial Day weekend and the last few days of the month. Overall across central Indiana, temperatures for May averaged near normal, with all main sites except for Lafayette finishing the month within a degree of average.

Site	May 2017 Avg Temp	May 2017 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	62.3	-0.4	85 on 18	35 on 8
Lafayette	59.4	-2.5	87 on 18	31 on 8
Muncie	62.4	+0.6	88 on 18	32 on 8
Terre Haute	63.5	+0.5	87 on 18	37 on 8
Bloomington	63.2	+0.6	86 on 16 and 18	36 on 8
Shelbyville	64.2	+1.3	87 on 16 and 18	36 on 8
Indy – Eagle Crk.	62.5	-0.3	86 on 18	36 on 8

At Indianapolis, there were 12 days with above normal average temperatures, 15 days with below normal average temperatures and 4 days with normal average temperatures.

May 2017 was tied for the 68th coolest in the Indianapolis area since 1871.

Precipitation

The wet pattern of late April continued throughout May for most of Indiana. Monthly precipitation was above normal for all of Indiana except for the northwest and southwest portions of the state. Monthly totals ranged from slightly less 3 inches in northwest Indiana to over 10 inches in portions of south central and southeast Indiana. Totals in central Indiana varied from 5 to nearly 10 inches.

Heavy rains were a frequent occurrence during May. An inch or more of rain fell somewhere in Indiana at the very beginning of May, the 3rd through the 5th, the 9th through the 10th, the 19th through the 21st, the 24th through the 25th and the 27th through the 29th. The only dry spell for the state occurred from the 11th through the 17th.

Widespread river flooding that began at the end of April became significant flooding in western and much of southern Indiana following the rains from the 3rd through the 5th. The dry spell during the middle of the month allowed all flooding to end except for the Wabash River in the Riverton area. The return of rain on the 19th brought renewed flooding to the Wabash River. Rains during the remainder of the month prolonged the flooding along the Wabash River and will extend the high water into June. The Wabash River had remained near or above flood stage for the entire month of May.

One of the worst flash flood events in Indiana history occurred during the late afternoon and early evening of the 19th just south of central Indiana. Heavy to torrential rains began to fall in the Salem area shortly after 4pm EDT and ended by 8pm EDT. In less than 4 hours, rains of more than 6 inches fell. The West Fork of Blue River at Salem

rose over 16.5 feet from 3:30 pm EDT to crest at 10:15 pm EDT. The rate of rise approached 9 feet per hour just before the United States Geological Service (USGS) equipment maxed out at 7:30 pm EDT. This catastrophic flash flood caused millions of dollars of damage and was among the worst to strike Indiana.

A much lesser flash flood happened in east central Indiana on the afternoon of the 24th. Rainfall of more than 2 inches fell in about a 4 hour period ending around 1 pm EDT in Henry County. Additional rain continued on and off through the early morning of the 25th. Flooding affected some Henry County homes and numerous local roads.

Site	May 2017 Precipitation	May 2017 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	8.51	+3.46	2.17 on 4	7 days 12-18
Lafayette	7.24	+3.05	2.04 on 9	7 days 11-17
Muncie	3.55(*)	-0.85	1.86 on 4	7 days 12-18
Terre Haute	6.76	+0.13	2.53 on 4	5 days 12-16
Bloomington	6.20	+0.96	1.43 on 4	5 days 12-16
Shelbyville	5.92	+0.64	1.61 on 4	5 days 12-16
Indy – Eagle Crk.	7.14	+1.87	1.82 on 4	5 days 12-16

May 2017 was the 8th wettest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.
(*) - Precipitation missing at Muncie on 5/25.

Severe Weather

An active month for weather saw multiple severe weather events impact central Indiana throughout May. Damaging winds accompanied thunderstorms on the evening of the 10th and early morning of the 11th from the Wabash Valley east through the southern portions of the Indianapolis metro area. Numerous trees were downed along with damage to structures and homes in Vigo County by winds estimated at up to 70 mph.

A frontal boundary hanging across the region brought multiple periods of strong to severe thunderstorms from the evening of the 18th through the evening of the 20th. On the afternoon of the 19th, scattered storms produced large hail across the area, including 2 inch hail in Bloomington near the campus of Indiana University. A storm near Pendleton in Madison County produced damage at the Nestle plant, causing 2 injuries and severe damage to a semi-truck and two 53 foot-long trailers. Severe storms erupted again during the evening of the 20th in vicinity of the warm front over

northern portions of central Indiana. A supercell tracked across Clinton and western Howard Counties, producing a small EF-1 tornado in the village of Forest that caused damage to a pole barn and a fire station. A second EF-1 tornado occurred just west of Thorntown in Boone County, causing damage to a barn.

Severe weather again impacted central Indiana at times over the Memorial Day weekend as yet another frontal boundary set up over the region. Severe storms developed over northern and central Illinois on the afternoon of the 26th, tracking into western portions of central Indiana during the evening. A supercell produced large hail up to golf ball size through Warren and Fountain Counties before developing into a squall line with damaging winds up to 70 to 75 mph through Montgomery and northwest Hendricks Counties. Significant wind damage occurred in Crawfordsville with numerous large trees and business signs downed. Additional storms ahead of a cold front on the evening of the 28th brought pockets of wind damage to southern and eastern portions of the Indianapolis metro area. The most extensive damage occurred west of Fountaintown in Shelby County where a pole barn was flattened.

Additional information on these storms can be found at the event summaries web page, <http://www.weather.gov/ind/events>

For information on severe weather in other areas during May, visit the Storm Prediction Center "Severe Weather Event Summaries" website at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/online/>.

Miscellaneous

The maximum wind gust at Indianapolis International Airport was 47 mph out of the southwest during the afternoon of the 17th. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 16 days during the month, with dense fog occurring on the 20th. Thunder was reported on 7 days during the month.

June 2017 Outlook

The official outlook for June 2017 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a greater chance for below normal temperatures for central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 72.0 degrees. The outlook also calls for a greater chance of above normal precipitation. The average precipitation for June at Indianapolis is 4.25".

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.